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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the changing economic conditions in Appalachia and the improved social services for children. According to statistics reported in 1969 nearly 43 percent of all children under 6 in Appalachia were categorized as poor and likely to require some special services, while only 5 percent were receiving such services. The Appalachian Regional Commission has concentrated its efforts on job training, transportation, and upgrading the quality of education in Appalachia. Several Appalachian programs are described briefly, including day care centers which offer child development services such as parent counseling, health and medical services, family planning, and pre- and postnatal care, and home-based outreach programs available for families of nonworking mothers who receive public assistance. Also described is the Black Appalachian Commission, which gathers information about the black population in Appalachia, identifies community problems, and mobilizes available resources. (Author/BRT)

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PROFILE OF APPALACHIA

By

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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THE DAY CARE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF AMERICA, INC.
1012 Fourteenth Street, N.W.
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October, 1974

What is Appalachia?

Today the term "Appalachia" is most commonly used to define the region and population of the mountainous areas of Kentucky, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The people are white, Anglo-Saxon, and poor. They live in the same house, in the same hollow, on the same mountain, generation after generation. The men work in the mines or cultivate small pieces of land which do not yield enough to feed their families through the winter. The women raise the children and try to make ends meet.

These people are familiar to us because we have seen them in photo essays, TV documentaries and films. They are photogenic, proud and enigmatic people who inspire romantic and nostalgic pictures of pioneer days in America, but the truth is that these people make up a very small part of the population of Appalachia. The major part of the population is invisible in its poverty and isolation because there is nothing romantic about them.

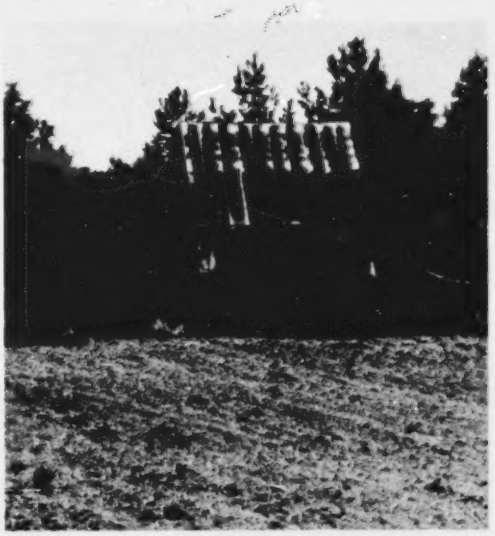
What, then, is Appalachia? It is the geographical region that runs along the Appalachian Mountain Range. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. There are 397 counties in Appalachia, and a little less than half of them are categorized as urban and metropolitan areas.

Eighteen million people live in the Region, and contrary to popular belief that the Appalachian population is all white, one million of these people are Black. The Blacks are poorer than the white population, which means that they are two or three times poorer than the national norms for poverty.

Early Industry in Appalachia

When the settlers first came to Appalachia, they lived off the land. There was enough game and tillable land to support their needs. Timber was the only industry in Appalachia, but when coal was discovered in the Region, land speculators bought up the land at low prices. In exchange, the coal industry gave people jobs at a time when the land could no longer support the growing population, but it also brought them diseases and misery they had never experienced before.

By the fifties, the demand for coal had decreased. The mines were closed down or were converted to technology and thousands of people lost their jobs. No other industries dared to come into the area, because transportation was non-existent; the cost of building roads over the mountainous terrain was prohibitive.



By the late fifties, many people had to leave their homes to find work; others tried to live off the meager products of the land. While the rest of the country went forward, Appalachia stood still and became more and more isolated, physically and culturally.

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In the early sixties, 5.4 million of the people in Appalachia lived in poverty. This was 31 percent of the population. Per capita income was $2,190. The official unemployment rate was 8.6 percent, compared to a national rate of 5.5 percent, but this statistic did not include hidden unemployment—people who were capable of working but had dropped out of the work force or had never entered it at all. From 1960 to 1970, one million people left the Appalachian Region.

Without an adequate tax base in the community, education, health care and other public services were stunted in their initial stages of life.

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New Industry, New Jobs

In ten years Appalachia changed from an agricultural to an industrial society. Statistics show that in 1970 the unemployment rate in Appalachia was 5.0 percent, only 0.1 percent higher than the national rate. Since 1965, the number of jobs has grown by 9 percent, adding 545,800 new jobs to the Region. The work force increased at the same rate. New manufacturing averaged 62,000 jobs annually, and there were 600 new industries in Appalachia in 1972. Per capita income grew to $2,970, and the number of people living in poverty declined to 3.2 million, or 18 percent of the Region's population.

The biggest and most rapid growth in Appalachia occurred in Southern Appalachia (parts of Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina) where there has been a 12 percent increase in employment or 260,300 new jobs since 1965. This surpassed the national growth rate by 2 percent. There was a simultaneous 12.4 percent increase in the work force which means that 271,800 new people entered the work force. Southern Appalachia was the only one of the four subregions (Northern, Central, Highlands and Southern) to show a net in-migration of workers during this period.

A major share of this growth in Southern Appalachia occurred in manufacturing where employment increased 18 percent or by 122,600 jobs. Manufacturing makes up half of the major industrial group employment in Southern Appalachia, and the textile and apparel industry make up 40 percent of the manufacturing sector.

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The other major source of new jobs in the subregion was in the area of finance, insurance, real estate and services, which were up 37 percent or 74,700 jobs. Growth in these areas was stimulated by the growth in manufacturing and the movement of the population from isolated rural areas into more concentrated groups.

Of the eight state parts included in Southern Appalachia, Appalachian Georgia showed the most radical upsurge in prosperity during the decade. It was the only area that showed a net in-migration of population during the sixties. From 1965 to 1969, employment increased 20.4 percent, and the work force showed a 20.2 percent increase. Manufacturing made up 62.4 percent of the major industrial group employment, the highest in the subregion. Employment in industry increased 27.5 percent, adding 23,000 new jobs. Per capita income almost doubled over the decade, reducing the incidence of poverty from 37.4 percent in 1960 to 16.3 percent in 1970, the largest percentage drop in the Region.

New Roads

Appalachia's physical isolation has been its biggest obstacle to economic development. Major interstate highways have consistently bypassed Appalachia because the average cost per mile of building a highway over the mountains is $5.6 million compared with the national average cost of $1.4 per mile.

In 1965 Congress passed the Appalachian Regional Development act which authorized federal funds for the construction of a 22 corridor, 2600 mile highway system to connect major federal highway arteries and to link key markets surrounding the Region and growth areas inside the Region. By March 1, 1974, a total of 881.1 miles of highway were completed, and 407.4 miles were under construction.

Once the physical barriers that isolate Appalachia are eliminated, the economic barriers are sure to follow. Industry cannot afford to ignore the advantageous location of the Appalachian Region between the profitable markets of the Atlantic Coast and the Midwest, or the large supply of labor waiting to be tapped. For the first time in decades, from 1970 to 1972, there was a reversal in the population trend from an outflow to an inflow, and the trend is projected to continue.

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New Industrial Generation

While the economic conditions in Appalachia are improving, the rapid shift from an agricultural to an industrial society has taken its toll on the population. Jobs are more plentiful, but many men lack the necessary skills or the transportation to be able to take advantage of them. Some men have found it necessary to leave the Region to find work, and homes are split up or broken. While there is a demand for women in textile and apparel industry, women with children have to depend on welfare or AFDC.

The children in Appalachia will be the first generation to grow up in an industrial society, but in the transformation from an agricultural society where children contributed to the family's survival, to an industrial society where they cannot bring home a paycheck until they are 16, children in Appalachia have become invisible. The need and potential of children to contribute to the new society have been overlooked.

In 1969, statistics from OEO and the Department of Welfare show that about 43 percent of all children under six in Appalachia were categorized as poor by OEO standards and likely to require some special services, but only 5 percent were the beneficiaries of such services. Head Start provided services to 11 percent of these children. Only 14 percent of the children identified

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as poor received public assistance under AFDC, and over 85 percent received no financial aid or services at all.

Appalachian Regional Commission

In 1965, when Congress passed the Appalachian Regional Development Act, it established the Appalachian Regional Commission. Its goals are "to provide the people of Appalachia with the health and skills they need to compete for opportunity wherever they choose to live, and to develop a self-sustaining economy capable of supporting population with rising incomes, improving standards of living and increasing employment opportunities." The Act specifies that the Commission concentrate its investments "in areas with a significant potential for future growth where the return on the public dollars invested will be greatest." Programs developed by the Commission are financed through combinations of local, state, private and federal funds.

The areas being given priority are geographical development, the highway system, and manpower development. The Appalachian Regional Commission has undertaken the job of preparing the work force to participate in the changing economy of the Region. The whole community benefits from their efforts. The result is a stable community that attracts industry and enjoys an ever-increasing improvement in its standard of living.

Since the development program began in 1965, it has assisted 622 vocational training facilities to develop job-relevant technical skills and to provide occupation information and guidance.

Funds have also gone into developing new approaches to job training especially designed for rural areas. Special attention is given to the needs of young people between the ages of 18 and 34 who, during the fifties and early sixties made up 52 percent of the Region's outmigrants. For them the Commission offers a variety of educational options which include vocational and technical training, summer camp programs, youth organizations, student internships and apprenticeships to help them enter the work force and become integral and socially responsible participants in their communities.

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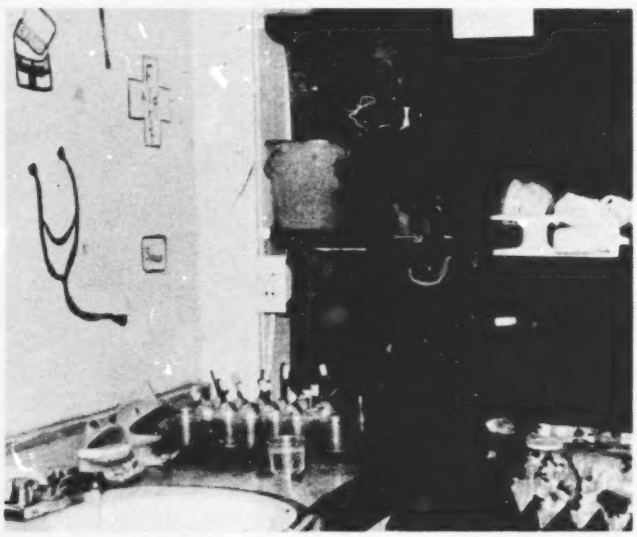
In addition to job training, the Commission is committed to equalizing and upgrading the quality of education in the Region through the development of multi-jurisdictional educational cooperatives called regional service agencies (RESA) which provide the opportunity for schools to combine resources so that poor school districts do not have to suffer for a low tax base in their communities.

Child Development Programs

Another large source of potential labor is women, but unless there are comprehensive day care and child development services adapted to the needs of the working mother, women will remain a potential labor force. The Commission has attempted to remedy this situation. While some kinds of child related services may be available, they are often overlapping in some areas, while leaving big gaps in other areas. It is also difficult for families to know where to find these services and how to use them. The goal of the Commission is to set up demonstration projects that deliver the whole range of child development services from child and parent counseling, health and medical services, to family planning and prenatal and postnatal care, through a single point of entry.

The day care center is the focal point of the single entry system. When a child enters the Commission's day care center, he is automatically linked to all the child related and family related services available in the community by referrals made through the day care center. A home-based outreach child development program is the point of entry for families of non-working mothers who receive public assistance. Cases are referred through the county welfare offices.



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The child development aspect of the Commission's activities has had its own history. In November of 1969, Congress asked the Commission to enlarge its health program to include projects geared to child development for the child from birth to six years of age. If services could be provided at an early enough age maybe many of the severe education and health problems prevalent among the adult population could be avoided in the upcoming generation.

In fiscal year 1972, the projects set up by the Commission served 125,445 children. Approximately 15,594 of them received comprehensive day care in centers or home-based programs; 350 centers were established, and 5,600 jobs were created. By March 1, 1974, the Commission had funded 249 child development programs in the Region.

Georgia Appalachian Child Development Program

Many programs have gotten under way in the last year. One of these is the Georgia Appalachian Child Development Project. The state of Georgia matched the Commission's grant under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act to create a two-year demonstration project that provides comprehensive child development services and vocational training in child development until the end of June, 1975. The project will serve 3,345 children in 35 centers and provide 689 jobs for the community. Sixteen hundred children from ages six months to six years, will have full day care in 34 centers in 24 counties.

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Vista has subcontracted with the Project to head a part-day preschool activity which is projected to serve 500 children in seven counties. The program will be run by 26 local and national Vista Volunteers. Vista is also responsible for encouraging and supporting existing efforts in child development under their Volunteer Community Development Project which has 14 local and national volunteers working in six counties.

Outreach Projects

Another aspect of the child development program in Appalachian Georgia is the Georgia Outreach Project administered by the Day Care and Child Development Council of America. People experienced in child development and who were reared in northern Georgia make weekly visits to the homes of children who are not eligible to attend the day care centers because their mothers do not work and are receiving welfare or AFDC. This home-based outreach program provides the same advantages that the day care centers do by being the single point of entry for the full range of child development services in the community. The Day Care Council's Outreach Project will serve 13 counties and 340 children.

Two other home-based outreach projects, the Coosa Valley Homebound Outreach Project and the Georgia Mountains Home Visitor Outreach, both organized by the Georgia Appalachian Child Development Project, will serve 12 counties, 257 children and 187 families.

In addition to day care services, the Georgia Appalachian Child Development Project has initiated a prenatal care, health and nutrition program called the Young Families Project which is available from the 120th day of pregnancy until birth. The Project has also set up technical and vocational courses for child development workers at nine colleges in northern Georgia. These courses provide preservice and inservice training, and career guidance in the field of child development.

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Transportation, Health, Housing and Environment

Transportation, vocational training and education, and child development are the most significant aspects of the Commission's efforts to develop the potential of the Region by enabling people to adapt to the changing economic situation in their communities. But the Commission is also involved in a wide range of other activities which will contribute substantially to creating stable service communities and improving the quality of life in Appalachia. Health care is one of the most important. In addition to 12 demonstration projects designed to improve the technique for delivery of health services throughout the Appalachian Region, the Commission has made new investments to establish wall-to-wall health care using the same single entry approach that is being used in child development. Special attention is given to health problems like black lung that are indigenous to the area.

Housing is another of the Commission's concerns. In 1970, 12.7 percent of all occupied housing in the Region was substandard, compared to 7.4 percent in the nation. Since 1971, the Commission has been authorized to make site development and off-site improvement grants. By June, 1973, the Commission had loaned more than $4.4 million to stimulate construction of 12,017 housing units.

The Commission is also concerned with the environment of the Appalachian Region. Projects approved by the Commission include mine area reclamation, soil conservation, water resource control and development, timber development to improve quality and productivity, junk car disposal, sewage treatment and environmental education.

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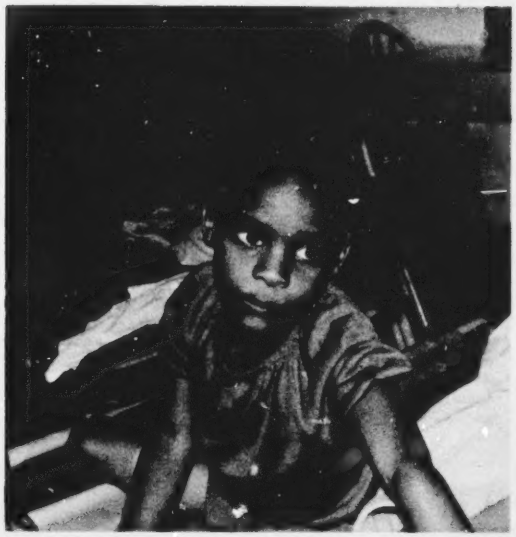
Black Appalachian Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission is not alone in its efforts to improve the quality of life in Appalachia. In 1969, the Black Appalachian Commission was founded by the Council of Southern Mountains to serve the needs of over one million Black people in Appalachia who, because of the myths about an all-white Appalachia, are completely overlooked. Appalachian Blacks are the lowest paid and the poorest housed in the Region, and therefore in the nation. They are concentrated largely in the Southern and Central subregions.



One of the Black Appalachian Commission's major programs has been to gather information about the Black population in Appalachia, because most of the research and statistics compiled on the Region are not delineated by race. The BAC will then be able to help the Black Appalachian community identify its problems and mobilize its resources so that it can deal more effectively with the institutional causes of its problems.

Education is another primary concern of the BAC. It is concentrating on upgrading the quality of education on the local, state and regional level by first assessing Black attitudes toward education, then helping community leaders in their efforts to attain meaningful experiences for Black children.

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Community Participation

None of these projects or commissions would work without the fundamental concept of community participation. It is one of the most effective ways of integrating the population into the new industrial society.

The Appalachian Regional Commission has developed the concept of local development districts, or LDDs as they are called. Local development districts are multi-county planning and development agencies created under the direction of the individual states and governed by boards of elected officials, civic leaders, and representatives of the people. These local development districts are the first steps toward building an institutional base for the Region to take over its own development. All 397 counties in Appalachia will eventually be organized into LDDs.

In addition to the local development districts, one of the priorities of all these projects is to utilize the people of the Region where possible to work in these projects. They are the ones who know best what their needs are and which needs should have priority. They also make contact with these programs a less frightening experience for the people they serve.

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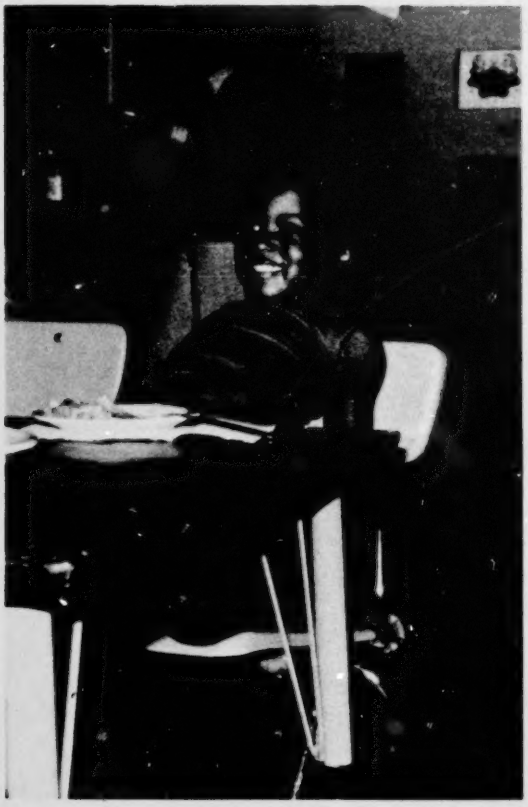

The list of organizations concerned about the problems of the Appalachian population is long. They are private and public, research organizations, religious organizations and legal organizations. It demonstrates that the nation recognizes it can no longer ignore the problems of 18 million people who are easy to overlook because of their poverty and isolation, and because over two million of them are children under the age of six.

The importance of these kinds of programs to industry, to the Appalachian Region and to its population cannot be overestimated. What happens when the funding for these projects ends (as it will for most of them in the next few years) and the demonstrations come to an end? What purpose will they have served if the knowledge and experience gained is allowed to go unnoticed or unused?

How can these efforts be sustained and others implemented? One way is to organize support in the community for state and federal legislation that would provide funds for these kinds of services and development programs on a permanent basis.

Another way is to look for funds and support in the community. Several industries like Mr. Apparel, Inc., the Skyland Textile Company and Vanderbilt Shirt Factory, all in North Carolina, have contributed to the development of the labor supply by setting up day care centers in buildings adjacent to or opposite their factories. Employees' children from ages two to six are eligible. The centers are open ten hours a day, five and a half days a week. They charge from $8.00 to $13.50 per week per child. The centers are staffed with teachers, and parents are encouraged to consult the staff and to visit their children during the day when it is convenient.

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When Congress passed the Appalachian Regional Development Act in 1965, its purpose was to initiate a series of development programs and demonstration projects that would have national application. The knowledge gained in the single entry approach to delivering social services can be useful to the communities these projects serve as well as to other communities in the Region, but the real goal of projects like these is to explore the possibilities of making a wide variety of services available to every community and for everyone, not just poverty-ridden families in Appalachia.

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